Agreement on nuclear risk reduction

1072. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether during his recent visit to Islamabad he has signed a major agreement on nuclear risk reduction;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the other agreements that were signed during the visit?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) No. During EAM's visit to Pakistan on January 13-14, 2007 both sides agreed on early signing of the Agreement on Reducing the Risk from Accidents relating to Nuclear Weapons. The agreement was signed in New Delhi on February 21, 2007.

(c) No other agreement was signed during the visit.

Pilgrim tourism in India and Pakistan

1073. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to promote pilgrim tourism in India and Pakistan; and

(b) the facilities that are being offered to pilgrims in both the countries?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Government have proposed to Pakistan Government the liberalisation of the bilateral visa regime to include Pilgrim Visas to each other's nationals desiring to visit religious shrines. During the Secretary (Culture) talks held in Islamabad on July 26-27, 2005, both countries agreed to expand the Bilateral Protocol on Visit to Religious Shrines, 1974, to increase the number of shrines and the number of pilgrims. India has proposed an expanded list of shrines in both countries for inclusion in the Bilateral Protocol.

(b) Visits of pilgrims between India and Pakistan are covered under the Bilateral Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines—1974. This provides for three Hindu pilgrimages (total 800 pilgrims) and four Sikh pilgrimages (total

7500 pilgrims) from India to Pakistan and five Muslim pilgrimages (total 1350 pilgrims) from Pakistan to India. Both Government facilitate the transportation, security and accommodation for stay of the pilgrims during their visits under the above Protocol.

Violence in Nepal

1074. SHRI SYED AZEEZ PASHA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the recent incidents of violence in Nepal between the Nepalese and Non-Nepalese;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether any enquiry was made as to the involvement of Indians living there in these incidents; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Government are not aware of incidents of violence in Nepal between 'Nepalese' and 'non-Nepalese' recently. There have, however, been disturbances in the Terai region of Nepal, where sections of the local population have, *inter alia,* demanded citizenship rights in Nepal.

(c) and (d) As the matter relates to developments within the territory of Nepal, it is for the Government of Nepal to address the issues concerned.

Scheme for railway line from China

†1075. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government of China is contemplating a scheme of laying a railway line through bordering areas adjoining India for connecting other cities of China with the capital of Tibbet-Lahasa;

(b) if so, whether Government of China also propose to extend the said railway line to Khunjarb pass situated along the border of Pakistan and China;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.